

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 892

HE 030 050

TITLE Report to the Maryland General Assembly on UMS Institutional and System Identities.

INSTITUTION Maryland Univ. System Administration, Adelphi.

PUB DATE 4 OCT 96

NOTE 12p.

PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Educational History; *Governing Boards; Higher Education; Public Policy; *State Universities

IDENTIFIERS Institutional Distinctiveness; *Names; University of Maryland; *University of Maryland System

ABSTRACT

This report examines the use of the name "University of Maryland System" (UMS) to characterize the state's university system and its 13 institutions. It is noted that the UMS name is somewhat misleading, in that it suggests that the system comprises only the seven institutions with "University of Maryland" in their name. The system name is often truncated as "University of Maryland," a name that many associate with the University of Maryland at College Park and the University of Maryland at Baltimore. A brief history of the university system and its constituent institutions is presented, along with name changes and proposed name changes offered in recent years. The UMS Regents recommend that the UMS name be changed to "University System of Maryland" to clearly distinguish the system from the components. They also recommend that the System Administration be renamed "System Headquarters," and endorse the following proposed changes: Center for Environmental and Estuarine Studies to University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Towson State University to Towson University, University of Maryland at Baltimore to University of Maryland, Baltimore, and University of Maryland College Park to University of Maryland, College Park.

(MDM)

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM
BOARD OF REGENTS



**REPORT TO
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON UMS INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEM
IDENTITIES**

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October 4, 1996

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS

**REPORT TO THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEM IDENTITIES**

October 4, 1996

I. INTRODUCTION

Charge from the General Assembly

This report comes in response to the April 1996 Joint Chairmen's Report on the Operating Budget section 36.02.22, which contains the following charge:

The committees appreciate the responsiveness of the system and the Board of Regents in addressing institutional identity issues previously raised on behalf of the University of Maryland College Park. The committees encourage the continued exploration of name changes to sharpen the separate identities of the System Administration, the University of Maryland College Park, the University of Maryland University College, and other higher education entities within the University of Maryland System. The Board of Regents is requested to report by December 1, 1996 on plans to strengthen institutional identities to reduce confusion of the general public and students, strengthen alumni development, and increase private support of member institutions.

Significance of issue

Institutional identity is a matter of great importance in the understanding, appreciation, and support of key constituencies. UMS Regent Earle Palmer Brown, one of the nation's leading public relations executives, has frequently noted that identity -- and the reputation that accompanies it -- is among an organization's most valuable assets. If the University of Maryland System and its 13 institutions are to achieve the national eminence called for in the 1988 founding legislation, then their identities must facilitate recognition of the nature and stature of the whole and its parts. And if the UMS is to become "a source of pride for all Marylanders," as called for in the System's vision statement, then the individual and collective identities must at once inform and inspire the citizenry.

Definition of problem

The name "University of Maryland System" has been a matter of some controversy from the earliest days of the organization. The crafting of the founding legislation in 1988 included extensive discussions and some disagreements regarding the name of the new System. The resulting name appears to have been a compromise that offended few and pleased few.

The University of Maryland System was formed from the merger of two existing systems of higher education in the state: the Board of Trustees of State Universities and Colleges and the University of Maryland. The resulting family of institutions had little

commonality or consistency of nomenclature. And the compromise name for the totality did little to help Marylanders understand that Frostburg State University and the University of Maryland at Baltimore, for example, were now part of the same system. On the contrary, because the System name is based on "University of Maryland" it contributes to public confusion in two ways:

- First, it suggests that the System comprises only the seven institutions that today include "University of Maryland" in their names. Not only does this cause confusion among external publics but some sense of alienation among internal publics (i.e., faculty, staff and students) at the "non-UM" institutions.
- Second, the System name is often truncated as "University of Maryland," a name many associate with the University of Maryland College Park and the University of Maryland at Baltimore. This leads to frequent misunderstanding about whether a discussion is specific to the flagship or applies to the System as a whole.

The tendency to refer to both the System and the College Park campus as "University of Maryland" is especially apparent and problematic in the news media. Despite consistent UMS efforts to encourage the media to use the full name of the University of Maryland System and the constituent institutions, reporters and editors continue to opt for the abbreviated name.

Whether in the media or in other public discourse, this overlapping of names makes difficult the work of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor as they seek to fulfill their responsibilities to the System as a whole. Routine phone calls and daily conversations demonstrate that communicating the role of the System leadership would be aided by an easily distinguishable System name.

In sum, the name "University of Maryland System" does not precisely or effectively denote the relationship of the whole to its parts. As the System evolves, strengthens, and delivers increasing benefits to the citizens of Maryland, it needs a name and identity that can be clearly marketed, reported, and understood.

Less problematic than the System name, but certainly no less important, are the names of its 13 institutions. These names all have long histories and are well-established with key constituencies. Changing institutional names, therefore, should be approached judiciously and undertaken only where the new name promises benefits that far outweigh the loss of a longstanding and widely accepted identity. Nevertheless, there appear to be some opportunities for positive changes at several UMS institutions; they are identified later in this report.

Radical changes to institutional names are not recommended. For example, the frequently cited option of beginning all institutional names with "University of Maryland" would be disruptive and costly and would potentially generate internal and external ill-will that far outweighed any gains from clarity of communications.

II. BACKGROUND

Brief history of "University of Maryland" identity

- 1785** Through the efforts of William Smith, one of Maryland's early educational leaders, Washington College in Chestertown and St. John's College in Annapolis are merged under state control to create the *University of Maryland*. [In 1805, the act creating the university is voided.]
- 1812** The Maryland General Assembly re-charters the College of Medicine of Maryland, established in Baltimore in 1807, as the *University of Maryland*, authorizing the college to add departments in arts and sciences, divinity, and law. [Despite its name, no state responsibility for the new institution is established.]
- 1865** The Maryland General Assembly approves in principle a plan to merge the undergraduate programs of the University of Maryland in Baltimore with St. John's College, Washington College, and the Maryland Agricultural College in College Park into a state-supported higher education system under the *University of Maryland* name. [This idea is abandoned in 1867, with the merger never having come to fruition.]
- 1920** The Maryland General Assembly approves a bill merging the University of Maryland's programs in Baltimore with those of Maryland State College in College Park [formerly the Maryland State College of Agriculture, a land grant institution, and before that, the Maryland Agricultural College]. This act creates the *University of Maryland at Baltimore* and the *University of Maryland College Park*.
- 1970** The Maryland General Assembly approves the organization of the *University of Maryland* into a five-campus system comprising the University of Maryland at Baltimore, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and University of Maryland University College.
- 1988** The Maryland General Assembly enacts the Maryland Charter for Higher Education, which creates the *University of Maryland System (UMS)*. UMS represents a merger of the five University of Maryland institutions that were joined in 1970, including the flagship University of Maryland College Park campus, with the six institutions from the Board of Trustees of State Universities and Colleges (Bowie State University, Coppin State College, Frostburg State University, Salisbury State University, Towson State University, and University of Baltimore.)

*Chief source: *A History of the University of Maryland* by George H. Callcott (Maryland Historical Society, 1966).

1988 founding legislation

Section 12-101 identifies the official name of each of the UMS institutions (except University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute). It also states: "'University' or 'University of Maryland' means the University of Maryland System."

Section 12-104 states: "Without the approval of the Governor and the General Assembly, the Board may not change the name of any constituent institution." Section 12-109 establishes that "presidents shall... have the authority to recommend change in the name or status of the institution."

1990 report "Managing Public Relationships"

In 1990 a systemwide committee issued the report *Managing Public Relationships*, an effort "to establish a broad framework within which the constituent institutions and the System office of the University of Maryland System can manage and improve their public relations programs." The report was updated by the systemwide University Relations Council in 1994. The concluding section of that report reads as follows:

One of the most persistent and perplexing issues facing the University of Maryland System is institutional identity. The names of individual institutions, as well as that of the System as a whole, are frequently identified as a source of confusion. However, there is no immediate plan to seek the legislative action required to change names. Therefore, consistency and repetition are especially important to build understanding in the short term. In addition:

- *The constituent institutions should review their identity programs (editorial and graphic) in an effort to minimize confusion and to emphasize institutional distinctiveness.*
- *Institutional affiliation with the System is an important (albeit secondary) concern. To indicate their affiliation, the constituent institutions should include the tagline "(institution) is a member of the University of Maryland System" on all publications with a circulation in excess of 5,000.*
- *The System identity program should reflect its nature as a federation of diverse institutions. System Administration should list the constituent institutions in alphabetical order on all major publications and on its letterhead.*
- *The System seal should serve as the mark for the Regents, the Chancellor, the System office, systemwide components and for systemwide or multi-campus programs and activities.*
- *The System as a whole should be referred to by its official name, "University of Maryland System" ("University System," "System" or "UMS" in second references). The name should be regularly monitored for acceptance and understanding among key publics.*

- *Since no institutional entity currently bears the name "University of Maryland," those words alone should not be used officially by System Administration or the constituent institutions.*

Chancellor's Advisory Council recommendations

The Chancellor's Advisory Council, a volunteer organization of 100 civic and business leaders, has long considered the matter of the System name. In 1990, the CAC formed a Task Force on UMS Identity, chaired by Jack Felton, then vice president for corporate communications at McCormick and past president of the Public Relations Society of America. Its final report to the Chancellor states: "The task force is unanimous in its view that the identity of the University of Maryland System requires careful and immediate study."

Ruder-Finn study

The CAC recommendation led the UMS to undertake an extensive communications study with the assistance of the consulting firm of Ruder-Finn, Inc. The study concluded there was a serious need for clarification of the various roles of those charged with leading the UMS before identity could be addressed. An addendum to the report noted:

It was apparent throughout the interviews that people inside and outside the University System are confused by the name and identification issues. However, in keeping with the overall focus of this strategy, we believe the institutional identification with the University and the System with the institutions is the most critical of the three issues.

The second most critical is the overall name, and the third is the System Administration name.

We are well aware that these are sensitive, highly political issues. However, as in the role clarification process, determining how to strengthen the public's perception of the University of Maryland System through clearer nomenclature and identification will be a positive initiative in itself.

Boards of Visitors recommendations

The volunteer Boards of Visitors at UMCP and UMAB have also given their attention to the confusion surrounding names. Among recommendations in the 1995 UMCP Board of Visitors report is the following:

The University of Maryland at College Park's Board of Visitors appreciates the responsiveness of the System and the Board of Regents in regard to addressing institutional identity issues raised in last year's report. The Board of Visitors continues to encourage the exploration of name changes to sharpen the separate identity of the System Administration from the University. If additional name changes are contemplated by the Board of Regents to reduce identity confusion,

consideration should also be given to strengthening the separate identities of institutions within the University of Maryland System, particularly in College Park where three separate higher education entities reside in the same geographical region and identity confusion is more pronounced.

The 1995 UMAB Board of Visitors report states:

Despite its history and status as the founding campus of the University of Maryland and its clear and unique mission as the campus for the professions, UMAB is neither well recognized nor well understood. It is frequently confused with the University of Maryland Medical System (i.e., the hospital) within Baltimore City. Outside the city limits, it is confused with College Park and, increasingly, with the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Other University Systems

Always helpful in considering issues such as system identity is a review of practices at other university systems across the country. As of 1994, the 53 university systems in the U.S. displayed numerous variations on names. Those variations can be grouped into four general categories:

- 23 names that end in "system" (e.g., Univ. of Wisconsin System)
- 10 names that sound like a single university (e.g., Univ. of North Carolina)
- 10 names that refer to the governing board (e.g., Illinois Board Of Regents)
- 10 names that are unique (e.g., Univ. System of Georgia)

III. RECENT REVIEW PROCESS

Subcommittee on Communications

In the fall of 1995, the Regents formed a special subcommittee, chaired by Earle Palmer Brown, to consider systemwide communications issues, including that of the UMS identity. Also currently serving on the Subcommittee are Regents Thomas Finan, Harry Hughes, and Constance Unseld.

During the Subcommittee's first meeting on September 29, 1995, Chancellor Langenberg provided a detailed review of the System name to the members of the Subcommittee and the UMS presidents in attendance. The meeting concluded with agreement to survey key constituencies as the basis for developing options for consideration by the UMS Presidents and Regents.

Survey of key constituencies

In October 1995, Chancellor Langenberg circulated a questionnaire on the qualities with which the University System should be associated and on the specific words that should be incorporated in the System name. The questionnaires were sent to UMS Regents; Presidents; Chancellor's Advisory Council; Systemwide Faculty, Staff and Student Councils; and the University Relations Council.

From 30 attributes, respondents preferred 1) quality; 2) strong; 3) innovative; 4) dynamic; and 5) solid. With regard to key words in the System name, of the 15 suggested terms the most frequently cited were 1) Maryland; 2) University; and 3) System.

Input from General Assembly

Following the appearance of a brief item in the *Sun* on a possible System name change, Board of Regents Chairman Billingsley wrote to members of the General Assembly assuring them that "the Regents will not recommend any change to the UMS identity unless it is clearly designed to improve public understanding, appreciation, and support." Chairman Billingsley went on to invite input from legislators. Senator Barbara Hoffman responded formally, noting that "the current system name reflects [its] mission and I see no reason to change its name or any of the institutions' names." Other members of the General Assembly have informally indicated support for constructive changes. As noted at the outset of this report, the 1996 Joint Chairmen's report specifically calls upon the Regents to continue their efforts to address the identity issue and to achieve greater clarity in nomenclature.

Input from UMS Presidents

On June 3, 1996, the Regents' Subcommittee on Communications held a joint meeting with the UMS Presidents Council. Council Chair Freeman Hrabowski devoted an hour of the Council's regularly scheduled meeting to a discussion of the System and institutional identities.

In preparation for the discussion, Regent E.P. Brown polled the presidents on their individual preferences for the System name. The results of that survey showed a slight preference for retaining the existing name. The leading contender for a new name was "University System of Maryland," followed by "Maryland University System".

During the Council meeting, President Hrabowski asked for a show of hands for and against a System name change. Seven presidents indicated their preference for keeping the existing name; three for changing it. Regent Brown also asked the Presidents what, if any, changes they might be contemplating for the names of their respective institutions. Among the changes discussed:

- Towson State University would like to drop "State" from its name;
- Center for Environmental and Estuarine Studies would like to change to University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science;
- Both UMCP and UMAB would like to refer to themselves as "University of Maryland" with their locations identified in a separate line.

Regents' review

In addition to the ongoing review of the identity issue by the Regents' Advancement Committee and the Subcommittee on Communications, the full Board of Regents reviewed and approved the contents of this report at their meeting of October 4, 1996.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

System identity

From the System's founding in 1988, opinion has been divided on the appropriateness of the name "University of Maryland System." The support for retaining that name by many of the UMS Presidents and by some members of the General Assembly is a heartening affirmation that the name has acquired positive associations among important constituencies. And yet confusion persists among many other constituencies, most of them external to the System. That persistent confusion externally, combined with divided opinion internally, leads the Regents to conclude that change is in order.

To clearly distinguish the System from the "UM" components, to be more inclusive of the "non-UM" components, and to help create greater public awareness, understanding and support of the System, the Regents recommend that the name "University of Maryland System" be changed to "University System of Maryland." This change combines the virtues of being subtle enough to draw on the recognition of the existing name, different enough to avoid confusion with any one institution, and denotative enough to convey easily the nature of the organization. Furthermore, they recommend that the necessary legislation be introduced during the 1997 session of the Maryland General Assembly and that the change take effect July 1, 1997.

In conjunction with the change in the name of the System, the Regents also recommend that System Administration be renamed "System Headquarters." The Regents direct that these changes be implemented in the least costly manner. They recognize this will mean a transition of several years, the ongoing use of supplies with the old name until they are exhausted, the gradual replacement of signage as required by wear, and the continued use of permanent signs bearing the old name (e.g., the entrance to the Shady Grove Education Center). Although this approach is not ideal for achieving acceptance of the new identity, the Regents are mindful that use of tuition and tax dollars for this purpose should be minimized.

At the same time, the Regents are eager to use the name change to strengthen the identity of the System. Therefore, they recommend the following additional steps be taken in conjunction with the adoption of the new identity:

- adaptation of the System seal to carry the new name
- development of a graphic identity package for both formal and informal purposes;
- consistent usage by the 13 institutions of a mark and tagline on major publications indicating their membership in the System;
- reissuance of the System Profile reflecting all new identities;
- publication of a System capabilities brochure to acquaint key constituencies not only with the new name but with the resources and benefits of the System;
- creation of a "pocket" style guide for media representatives;
- continuing promotion of not only System identity but System accomplishments.

Strengthen Institutional Identities

The presidents hold the authority to recommend to the Regents changes in the names of their respective institutions. In response to the survey noted earlier in this report, four presidents have requested such changes. The Regents endorse the following proposed changes:

- Center for Environmental and Estuarine Studies to University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Towson State University to Towson University
- University of Maryland at Baltimore to University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of Maryland College Park to University of Maryland, College Park

The Regents also recognize the prerogative of University of Maryland College Park and University of Maryland at Baltimore to use "University of Maryland" as they see fit in their communications and outreach efforts. However, some official purposes (e.g., state budget requests), many public communications (e.g., telephone directories), and most systemwide documents will require continuing use of the extended institutional names to distinguish clearly between the institutions.

These changes alone will not strengthen institutional identities. They must be accompanied by a redoubling of the public relations and marketing efforts at all of the system institutions. The name changes will provide an added opportunity to explain to various publics the nature, mission and goals of the institution. For example, President Hoke Smith at Towson plans to use the change at his institution as a reminder to current and prospective donors that private support is critical to the future of the campus.

Whether institutions change or retain their names, they can strengthen their external recognition through coherent institutional graphic and editorial identity programs. In addition, the Regents encourage the institutions to continue to coordinate their communications efforts through the University Relations Council, as well as ongoing inter-institutional cooperation (such as that between UMCP and UMUC in their media relations programs). Just as the Regents encourage the institutions to help promote the System identity, so too they urge System Administration to continue to amplify institutional identities and messages.

Strengthen Alumni Development and Private Support

The clarification of System and institutional identities can help set the stage to "strengthen alumni development and private support," as called for in the Joint Chairmen's Report. However, the proposed changes serve primarily to remove an impediment; they do not in and of themselves engender increased loyalty to the institution. Proactive, well-managed, strategically focused advancement programs will be required if the UMS institutions are to enhance significantly current levels of involvement and support from graduates and donors. These programs will also require adequate levels of investment by the institutions in their fundraising, alumni and communications programs.

As the institutions strengthen their advancement operations and as the University System prepares to launch a new comprehensive fundraising campaign, the Regents strongly urge the State to consider reviving the highly successful Private Donor Incentive Program. By matching private gifts with state funds, this program -- in conjunction with clear institutional identities -- can spur the levels of philanthropic support all UMS institutions need to give them the margin of excellence.

Timetable

The recommendations for changes in System and institutional identities will be included in legislation to be introduced during the 1997 session of the General Assembly and, if approved, will take effect July 1, 1997.

V. CONCLUSION

A university system -- by any other name -- is only as good as the institutions it comprises and the level of cooperation they exhibit. Effective leadership at the institutional and System levels, along with strong support from internal and external constituencies (including state officials, alumni and donors) will enable the organization to prosper and to serve effectively the students and citizens it was created to benefit. The Regents offer these recommendations in the sincere hope that they help create a climate in which quality, leadership, and service are the attributes by which the University System of Maryland is known.